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SUBJECT: ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH TO TRAVEL TO THE U.S.

¶1. (SBU) Summary. Incoming and outgoing DPOs made an introductory call on the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I on August 4 to discuss developments with Halki and the Patriarch's upcoming travel to the United States. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) The Patriarch shared that he would be in the United States between October 20 and November 5, attending the Eighth Symposium of Religion, Science, and the Environment scheduled in New Orleans October 18 - 25. His All Holiness is scheduled to address attendees at the official opening October 21 after visiting Memphis. He is also scheduled to travel to New York, Atlanta, and Washington, D.C. He reported that "his people in America" had arranged for a lunch for him with Secretary Clinton and a meeting with POTUS and VP while he is in Washington November 2 - 5.

¶3. (SBU) The Patriarch said he had learned that Minister for European Affairs Egemen Bagis wanted to meet with him. He was waiting to hear which of three dates he proposed would be accepted by Bagis. When asked through which means the Patriarchate communicated with the GOT, the Patriarch responded that the director of the Patriarchate's press office (a German citizen) was working through the German Ambassador. According to the Patriarch, the German Ambassador told the press officer that Bagis responded favorably to the Ambassador's suggestion of meeting with the Patriarch and asked for the Ambassador's help in arranging a meeting.

¶4. (SBU) Comment: Several months ago, the Patriarch and Bagis had dinner at the Patriarch's residence in Tarabya, Istanbul. As far as we know, the German Ambassador's involvement is new and may prove helpful. Although it is not clear to what extent Bagis's purported interest in a meeting may signal genuine GOT interest in working toward a solution amenable to the Patriarchate, it does at least represent a much needed link between the two parties. End Comment.

WIENER